Historic Preservation

QUARTERLY OF THE NATIONAL TRUST
FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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DECATUR HOUSE

Mrs. Truxtun Beale on May 1 entertained the Board of Trustees of the National Trust at a reception in her historic house on Lafayette Square, Washington, D. C., when public announcement was made of her intention to bequeath the house and part of its contents to the Trust, with an endowment for its preservation.

Benjamin H. Latrobe, architect of the U. S. Capitol, and of St. John's Church, also on Lafayette Square, built the Georgian mansion for Commodore Stephen Decatur, hero of the Barbary Wars and War of 1812. It was built chiefly with prize money won in his daring naval exploits. The house for its first brief season was the social center of the capital until its owner was mortally wounded in a duel with Commodore Barron in 1820.

His widow retired to another residence and until 1836, when it was sold to John Gadsby, host of the National Hotel, it was occupied by distinguished tenants, the Russian Minister, Baron de Tuyll; and by three Secretaries of State, Henry Clay, Edward Livingston, and Martin Van Buren. Later occupants of the house were George M. Dallas, Vice President in Polk's administration; the British Minister, Sir Charles Vaughan; the French Minister, Baron Hyde de Neuville; and Judah P. Benjamin, Senator from Louisiana and later Secretary of the Treasury of the Confederacy.

After the Civil War, General Edward Fitzgerald Beale purchased the house, which has remained in the family ever since, serving as the scene of many brilliant diplomatic and social functions in the nation's capital. It was inherited by his son, Truxton Beale, Minister to Persia and Greece. Mrs. Beale retained the late Thomas Tileston Waterman, a charter associate of the Trust, as architect for its restoration in 1944. The restoration was materially aided by the finding of 11 of Latrobe's original drawings for the house.

ANNUAL MEETING

October 2 and 3 have been selected as the dates for the Annual Meeting of the National Trust in Newport and Providence, R. I. Mrs. George Henry Warren will be in charge of local arrangements. Meetings on both mornings will be held at the Art Association in Newport. On Friday luncheon will be at the Clambake Club and the annual dinner at *The Breakers*. The historic buildings tour of Newport will be on Friday afternoon. Details of the program in Providence on Saturday afternoon will be announced later.

CORONATION YEAR

In special observance of Coronation year, the National Trust organizations of the United States and England announced the exchange of membership privileges. Upon presenting our membership card to the Headquarters Office, 42 Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W. 1, a card will be issued giving free admission to all properties administered by the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Scenic Beauty, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Members of the English National Trust are being welcomed at headquarters in Washington, and introductions are arranged and tours planned to sites and buildings administered by member organizations, as well as to *Woodlawn Plantation,* Va., a Trust-administered property.

SHROPSHIRE ADULT COLLEGE

July 8-29 are the dates that have been set for the second English National Trust Summer School for the Study of the Great Houses of England. The summer course in fine arts, architecture and history will be held at Attingham, and will include a tour of Derbyshire, Cotswold and the Bath District. The course is directed by George Trevelyan, Warden of the College, and Helen Lowenthal, Summer Schools Secretary of the National Trust. Lecture periods and tutorials by outstanding authorities will be held on the medieval, the Elizabethan and the Jacobean house; the age of Wren and the Baroque; influence of Lord Burlington and the Palladians; Adam and the classical movement; Regency and 19th century revivals; landscape gardens; and the social significance of the great houses.

Applications are now being accepted, and may be addressed to The Warden, Attingham Park, near Shrewsbury, England. Information is available at the office of the National Trust, 712 Jackson Place, Washington 6, D. C.

FOREIGN PRESERVATION

Cuzco, Reconstruction of the Town and Restoration of its Monuments is a report of the 1951 expedition of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations to the earthquake-ravaged ancient Peruvian city. Published in Paris, as III in the series on Museums and Monuments, the 55-page report is copiously illustrated with photographs showing the earthquake damage to the three cities, prehistoric, colonial, and modern capital, and the proposed solution.

The report includes a summary of the entire survey, a pilot plan for restoration and reconstruction, a study of streets, open spaces and traffic reform. Copies are available at $1.50 each.

Decatur House entrance from photograph by Thomas Tileston Waterman. Library of Congress.

712 JACKSON PLACE

The Honorable Winthrop W. Aldrich has resigned as Trustee of the National Trust to assume his post in London as Ambassador to Great Britain.

David E. Finley was one of the principal speakers at the annual meeting of the American Institute of Decorators, a National Trust member organization, held March 31, in New York. His subject was, "The National Trust and Historic Preservation." Hardinge Scholle, Consultant, then gave an illustrated lecture, "The National Trust and the American Heritage."

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Surface sailed from New York on March 24 for a six-weeks tour of Great Britain and the continent. Mr. Surface spent ten days in England visiting the English National Trust headquarters, studying administrative procedures there, and viewing Trust properties. They then left for Heidelberg, Germany, to visit daughter and son-in-law Lt. and Mrs. William F. Henson, and to introduce themselves to William F. Henson, Jr., their first grandchild, born March 16. After a brief tour of Germany, France, and the Netherlands they will return on May 25.

On April 1, Frederick L. Rath, Jr., addressed the Rotary Club luncheon at Bethlehem, Pa., on privately-sponsored, city-wide programs of historic preservation and their cultural and economic value to the community. In response to a special request, he showed colored slides of similar projects of National Trust member organizations, particularly the Old Salem project in Winston-Salem, N. C., a city settled by Moravians emigrating from Bethlehem.

Mrs. Helen Duprey Bullock attended a meeting of the Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace Foundation and the official Virginia State delegates in February in Staunton, Va. Plans for the national centennial celebration in 1956 of the president's birth were discussed.

PHILADELPHIA PROGRAM

On February 24 in Philadelphia, Director Frederick L. Rath, Jr., was principal speaker at a dinner sponsored by the Greater Philadelphia Movement on behalf of historic preservation. At that time the formation of a Philadelphia Historic Buildings Committee was proposed, which has as its objective preservation and restoration of worthy structures within the historic city. It will be city-wide and will have members representing groups, professions, organizations and governmental bodies. Subcommittees of historians, architects, city planners, business men and others will outline a program to be agreed upon by the Committee.

Enabling legislation from the state will be sought, if needed, to empower Mayor and Council to enact zoning legislation to protect designated old and historic areas. A symposium held in Harrisburg on April 18 was attended by representatives of the Committee, Mr. Rath, and members of state and local agencies to discuss the enabling legislation and its application to historic areas throughout Pennsylvania.

Part of the Philadelphia program has already passed through the preliminary stages. Under the auspices of a special committee of The Germantown Historical Society, a member organization, and with the cooperation of the National Trust in the planning stage, a complete survey has been made of the more than 100 colonial and federal period houses remaining in the old area and of about 200 in the Society Hill section. Documentary, photographic and evaluative records were provided by architectural historians, and the results of the survey are to be published soon by the American Philosophical Society. Based upon this survey a broad but realistic program of preservation and redevelopment is proposed.

COOPERSTOWN SEMINARS

July 5-11 has been scheduled for the sixth annual Seminars on American Culture to be held in Cooperstown, New York, under the auspices of the New York State Historical Association. The courses are designed for local historians, collectors, writers, teachers, museum personnel and others interested in early Americana. Among the National Trust members who will conduct courses are Carl Carmer on "Patterns of American Folk History;" Albert B. Corey on "Using Local History;" and Carl E. Guthe on "The School and the Museum." Further information may be obtained from Louis C. Jones, Director, at Cooperstown.

MILITARY HISTORY

Incorporated in 1951 in Washington, D. C., the Company of Military Historians and Collectors is a private, non-profit, educational institution devoted to the study and dissemination of information about military history, uniforms, weapons, insignia and equipage. Many of the members, both professional and amateur, are noted collectors. It publishes a professional journal, profusely illustrated, and distributes annually a series of 16 hand-colored prints, "Military Uniforms in America." Information may be obtained from Capt. Charles West, Secretary, c/o *Time* Inc., 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y.

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"MORTALITY" IN MISSOURI

Charles van Ravenswaay, Director of the Missouri Historical Society, in the January *Bulletin,* gives a sad "Mortality Report". He writes, "The war on Missouri's historic buildings continues. Almost every month comes the report that another of the state's historic buildings has been destroyed, and even in the dwindling number of those that remain, alterations destroy much of their interest."

Among those listed is the handsome old stone bridge (1840), crossing the Frene Creek near Hermann, removed by the State Highway Department; *Castleman House* (c 1830), near Arrow Rock, one of the handsomest of the surviving Federal houses falling into ruin; and *Matson House* (1813) of great architectural and historical interest recently has been stripped of its fine walnut woodwork and converted into a garage in St. Charles County.

In the same issue, Dr. William Swekosky, local historian, describes the demolition of Madame Julie Cerre Soulard's mansion, "the most historic house in St. Louis." This mansion which stood on the corner of 9th and Marion streets for 115 years was sold by a corporation of St. Vincent's Church and razed by the State Highway Department.

Although Missouri has played a major role in the nation's westward expansion—it has been profligate with its historical resources, according to van Ravenswaay. "The interest of Americans everywhere in historic buildings is so obvious, so great, that there can no longer be any possible question over the popular justification for a state-sponsored historic buildings program. More than a million people visit *Mount Vernon* yearly . . . History draws more visitors to Philadelphia than probably any other single factor, and the Lincoln memory is one of the important resources of the State of Illinois. In Missouri more than 130,000 tourists come to see Mark Twain's home in Hannibal each year, and one Sunday that we know about last August over 5,000 people drove out in the country near Kansas City to see the restored block-house on the site of Fort Osage . . ."

From the legal standpoint, Missouri has a better opportunity than most states to forward a preservation movement, for its new Constitution includes a generous provision for the creation of a state-sponsored historic sites and buildings program.

Article III, Section 48, contains the following provision:

> The General Assembly may enact laws and make appropriations to preserve and perpetuate memorials of the history of the state by parks, buildings, monuments, statues, paintings, documents of historical value or by other means, and to preserve places of historic or archaeological interest or scenic beauty, and for such purposes private property or the use thereof may be acquired by gift, purchase or eminent domain or may be subjected to reasonable regulation or control.

This constitutional authority has been dormant because no legislative action has been taken on it. In 1946, the Missouri Historical Society (a National Trust member) joined with many other patriotic and civic groups to form the Missouri Historical Monuments Association, to sponsor a bill to forward the constitutional provision. Despite statewide membership and editorial support of major newspapers, the bill failed to pass. Friends in the Legislature blamed the failure on lack of information and interest on the part of legislators.

As Missouri moves towards the celebration of the sesquicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase, efforts will again be made to make the constitutional provision a living and vital force to "demonstrate Missouri's pride in its past, and a desire to save the visible souvenirs of that past from heedless destruction." We wish our Missouri friends, and all of those embarked in the slow but rewarding process of strengthening the preservation movement, every success. —H. D. B.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRESS

On January 26, 1953, the city of Richmond, Va., adopted an ordinance "To encourage the preservation of buildings of historic interest in the city of Richmond." The ordinance was submitted by Vice-Mayor Thomas P. Bryan and supported by the William Byrd Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, and had been developed in part from materials supplied by the National Trust. On March 9, the City Council appointed the Committee on Historic Buildings, naming Miss Mary Wingfield Scott (A.P.V.A.), Councilman Phil J. Bagley, Jr., and Marcellus Wright, Jr., A.I.A., to serve terms of one, two and three years respectively.

DESTRUCTION

San Francisco, Calif.—Damage close to $500,000 was estimated after a three-alarm fire wrecked the famous old Hotaling Building in March. The century-old one-time whisky warehouse in the financial district had escaped the flames of 1906, which gave rise to Charles K. Field's famous quatrain:

> If, as they say, God spanked the town for being over-frisky,
> Why did He burn the churches down, and save Hotaling's whisky?

The building had been restored recently by the local chapter of the American Institute of Decorators, and at the time of the blaze more than 60 exhibitors had installed costly displays for a scheduled home show, all of which were destroyed. Plans have been made to restore the building and open a new exhibit.

Zanesville, Ohio—Old Drone Mill, built a few years after the founding of the city in 1797, is to be razed. No plans for construction on the site have been announced.

New York, N. Y.—Van Pelt Manor House, built by a Dutch farmer in 1686 in Brooklyn, was ripped down by orders of the Park Department as a "safety measure." Rubble from the historic house which had been occupied by both George Washington and Lord Howe, British commander during the Revolution, was dumped in Marine Park. Descendants of Dutch settlers, and preservation society members in New York were engaged in a campaign to raise funds to save the building. However, the Park Department could not afford a watchman to control the repeated depredations of young vandals and ordered its immediate destruction.

Greensburg, Pa.—An overheated hot-air furnace, installed last year, was responsible for the fire that destroyed Fort Palmer Presbyterian Church, one of Ligonier Valley's historic and religious landmarks.

New Haven, Conn.—For the third time in less than two years, hoodlums desecrated the historic Grove Street cemetery (founded 1797), toppling more than 33 stones, many of which weighed from 600 to 700 pounds. The weight of the stones, and the severe cold and ice increased the damage done to them in being overturned and in shattering nearby grave markers. Most of the damage occurred to marble tombstones of the 1813-1850 period, and these shattered slabs cannot be replaced.

Kittery, Me.—Dismantling of *Sparhawk Mansion*, the great Georgian House built in 1742 by Sir William Pepperell, has begun. Portions of the 3-story, 15-room mansion noted for its elaborate wainscoating and other ornately carved woodwork, were sold for use in another building outside the state. The owners have had the property on the market for dismantling for some time, as they plan to retain the land and a portion of the old house for development.

Nat Fein, New York Herald-Tribune.

Since 1924 the old Victorian mansion on Park Avenue in New York City owned by the late Mrs. Robert Bacon, has defied successfully all efforts to engulf it in the apartment development on two sides. The apartment won, the mansion is coming down and a 15-story addition will round out the L-shaped apartment building.

Sterling, Ill.—Two of the town's oldest surviving homesteads will be replaced by parking facilities for a nearby factory. The old Frazer homestead has already been destroyed, and the Diller house, built in 1856, by Gabriel Davis, grandfather of the last owner, is scheduled for demolition.

Burlingame, Calif.—The city has called for bids for razing the 2-story, 17-room Gunst mansion on the Peninsula. It was initially purchased in 1940 with its 7½-acre landscaped estate as a community center and an addition to Washington Park. After use as draft board and Red Cross headquarters, and brief use as recreation department offices, it was vacated. It is now so far gone that city officials claim its renovation is impossible.

PROPOSED PRESERVATION

J. R. Snyder, Del.
Proposed development of 30th and M, N. W., Georgetown, D. C.

Washington, D. C.—In 1951, when it became known that the northwest corner of 30th and M Streets, N.W., might be sold to commercial interests for demolition, a group of Georgetown citizens formed a corporation to save these fine old houses. The houses were owned in the late 1790's by Governor Thomas Sim Lee of Maryland, a friend of George Washington's, and are pre-Revolutionary.

Stock in Historic Georgetown, Inc., was offered for sale in 1952 to Georgetown residents interested in preserving the unique architectural character of this area of the nation's capital. The property was purchased and plans for remodelling three stores and converting the upper floors into seven apartments with a walled garden were completed by William Dewey Foster, A.I.A. This spring 33,850 additional shares of stock in blocks of 100 at $1.00 per share were put on public sale. There are no underwriting costs and no stock has been transferred for less than par value. The Directors have expressed the hope that this civic enterprise will also prove to be a sound investment.

Most of the members of the corporation, and its officers are also active members of the National Trust. Frederick H. Brooks, the President; Edward Burling, Jr., the Treasurer; and Stephen V. C. Morris, one of the Directors, have presented generous blocks of the stock to the Trust.

Yorktown, Va.—Purchase of the 247-year-old West House and 1.88 acres of land has been announced by Director Conrad L. Wirth of the National Park Service. The house is one of the oldest in the colonial port town. It was occupied by British soldiers during the siege of Yorktown and still bears the marks of American cannon fire; in the Civil War it was occupied by Union forces. It is scheduled to become part of the Colonial National Historical Park.

Virginia City, Nev.—Plans to restore the belfry of Gold's Hill old firehouse have been announced. The pioneer building, topped by cupola and bell, collapsed last year from the weight of snow.

Faribault, Minn.—Repairs and renovation of the Alexander Faribault House are being brought to completion under the direction of the Rice County Historical Society. They hope to have the work completed in time for the centennial anniversary of the pioneer building.

Nashville, Tenn.—A bill authorizing the purchase of *Belle Meade* and 25 acres of the old manor property for $125,000 passed both houses of the legislature. It provides that the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities, a National Trust member, raise $50,000 for its renovation, and assume its operation and maintenance. The place has been one of the state's show places since its erection in 1853 by William Giles Harding.

Library of Congress.
Georgetown buildings in 1935 from photograph by Thomas T. Waterman.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Award of the Founder's Fund of approximately $1,800 to restore the colonial garden at *Smith's Castle*, Cocumscussoc, in Wickford, R. I., was announced at the 40th annual meeting of the Garden Club of America held in New Orleans in March. The South County Garden Club of Rhode Island will administer the fund to develop the garden on a plan established by research of the Cocumscussoc Association, which is restoring the notable old brick house.

The Old Custom House (1789), first in New York State, which was saved from destruction by former governor of New Jersey, Charles Edison, is being restored as "An American Home of Whaling Days" by the Old Sagg-Harbuor Committee. The house will be open to the public from July 4 through October 12 from 10 to 5 week days, and 2 to 5 p.m., Sundays and holidays. This summer, a tour of ten historic houses of the Long Island whaling village will be held to raise additional funds for the Committee's restoration program.

Since the last quarterly, the following new member organizations have joined the National Trust: THE FAIRMOUNT PARK ASSOCIATION (Pa.), MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY OF COLONIAL DAMES OF AMERICA, THE PILGRIM JOHN HOWLAND SOCIETY (Mass.), and the VIEUX CARRE PROPERTY OWNERS & ASSOCIATES, INC. (La.)

The Friends of Old Dover (Del.) made an award of merit to the Walter L. Fox Post No. 2 of the American Legion for its contribution to the preservation and perpetuation of the colonial heritage of that city. The award was presented at the 35th annual birthday dinner to the post for restoring one of the city's colonial buildings as its headquarters.

Leonard Carmichael, psychologist and educator, recently president of Tufts College, was inducted as secretary of the Smithsonian Institution on January 2. He is *ex-officio* a member of the National Trust.

Colonial Williamsburg has issued a report of the trustees covering the first twenty-five years of the progress of the vast scheme of restoration of the colonial capital of Virginia. In this report, Kenneth Chorley, the president, traces this outstanding preservation project from the first casual meeting of the rector of Bruton Parish Church in 1926 with John D. Rockefeller, Jr., through the period when more than $30 million was spent on restoring 82 colonial buildings, reconstructing 341 others, and razing 616 buildings of later date. Williamsburg's program includes a plan for another ten years of restoration and reconstruction to achieve Mr. Rockefeller's announced aim, "Colonial Williamsburg must help make history today—not simply serve as a reminder of history."

Old Economy, the settlement of the Harmony Society at Ambridge in 1840-50, is extending its restoration program under the sponsorship of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Restoration of the community gardens, furnishing of the Great House of the community's leaders, and removing later construction are scheduled. Exhibits are being prepared to show the history of this Utopian society from its founding in 1804 until its dissolution in 1905.

Old Salem, Inc., has had a traffic survey made by Wilbur Smith and Associates, which was published as *North-South Traffic Improvements; Old Salem, N. C.* The proposed highway development is designed to ease traffic flow and remove it from the restoration area of the old Moravian City.

The Architecture of Baltimore; a Pictorial History by Richard Hubbard Howland, and Eleanor Patterson Spencer; edited by Wilbur H. Hunter, Jr., with a foreword by Henry-Russell Hitchcock, has been published under the sponsorship of the Peale Museum of that city. Copies are available through the Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore 18, Md.

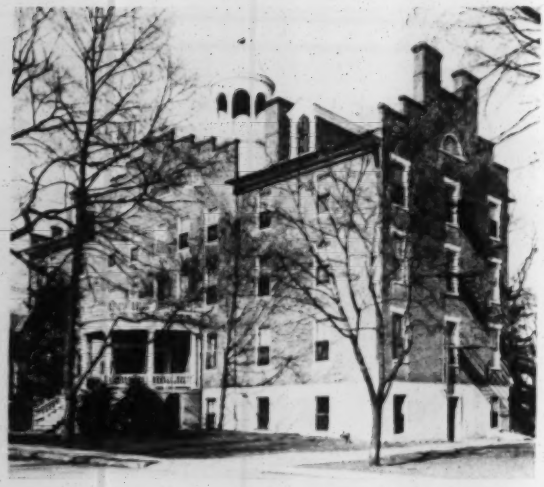
Minnesota Historical Society has announced the acquisition of 67 documents of major importance, long-missing records of the first Lewis and Clarke expedition to the Northwest. The papers were the gift of Mrs. Vaclav Vytlacil and were the property of her late mother, who inherited them from her grandfather, Gen. John H. Hammond. How they came into the Civil War general's possession is unknown, but they have been authenticated. This year, marking the centennial of the Louisiana Purchase, finds historians particularly interested in every facet of the expedition authorized by President Jefferson to explore the newly-acquired territory.

NECROLOGY

It is much too impersonal to report formally upon the death of one of our Trustees, James R. Edmunds, Jr., nor could formal notice convey the extent of his interest in the cause of historic preservation and our organization. In 1947, then President of the American Institute of Architects, he was elected to the first Executive Board of the National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings, and last fall he became a Trustee of the National Trust at the re-organization meeting. During these years he came many times from Baltimore to attend meetings, giving sage counsel and always manifesting an understanding of the many problems confronting the new and growing organizations. A lengthy resumé of his brilliant career is not necessary, as we say with so many others, assuredly we shall miss him.

—FLR, Jr.

IN DANGER



Old Dormitory (1832) Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa., an architectural and historical landmark which featured extensively as lookout post and hospital in the Battle of Gettysburg, is slated for destruction unless funds to strengthen and stabilize the structure and maintain it can be raised.

Tucson, Ariz.—Plans for a proposed civic center, courthouse annex and juvenile detention home for the city of Tucson and Pima County, with a large area for downtown parking, threatened 8 city blocks of the oldest surviving portion of the city. A second proposal reduced the area to be acquired to four blocks, and an expenditure of $2,250,000 to enlarge the present courthouse by enclosing the patio and providing underground parking. A third proposal, initiated by architects and others anxious to preserve the "Governor's Corner" and other old adobes reminiscent of Pueblo days had the support of the Tucson *Daily Citizen*, which in an editorial "Big Project, Think Big," stated:

> . . . One of the definite values in the area considered for acquisition is historical. There are well-preserved structures along Main, Alameda, Washington and Meyer streets which go back to the Old Pueblo days of the city wall practically a hundred years ago.
>
> It would be a shame if all these old buildings were sacrificed either to the normal attrition of private development or to make way for modern city and county buildings. The wisdom of thinking now in a big way for the future would become more evident with the passage of another 10, another 20 or 30 years.
>
> Expediency, or false economy, should not be allowed to obscure the bigger picture momentarily in sight when the acquiring of eight strategic square blocks was proposed.

Celilo Falls, Ore.—Four Indian chieftains of the Yakima tribe have appealed to "Christians throughout the land" to save an ancient shrine and fishing place from inundation by erection of the Dallas Dam on Columbia River. Both fishing grounds and rocks bear prehistoric writings significant in the Yakima tradition, and by treaty of 1855 had been given to the tribe for "all time."

Princeton, Ill.—Owen Lovejoy's old farm home, famous station on the "underground railroad" is in danger of being razed for commercial use. The preacher-statesman, whom Lincoln called his "most generous friend," was the brother of Elijah, fiery abolitionist and champion of a free press, who was killed by a mob in 1837.

Fredericksburg, Va.—After some years of serving as a storage place for automobile parts, the 119-year-old home on Charlotte Street where Commodore Matthew Fontaine Maury lived was offered for sale. The owner gave 60 days for purchasers to remove it from the lot. Efforts are being made to preserve it in some other location, as a memorial to the Fredericksburg citizen who became internationally famous as "The Pathfinder of the Seas."

Boston, Mass.—Old North Church, from which the historic lanterns signalled to Paul Revere, has become too popular, according to The Lantern League, a National Trust member. More than 100,000 sightseers a year visit the 230-year-old historic shrine, and the toll of time and traffic has necessitated an immediate campaign for essential repairs. At least $100,000 is needed to repair and maintain the structure.

Blount County, Tenn.—Sam Houston's one-room log school house (1790), where the general taught prior to his service in the War of 1812, is deteriorating rapidly, its chimney has fallen and its roof is rotten. The State of Tennessee appropriated money in 1943 for its purchase and a small sum for its repair at a time when Texans offered to buy it and remove it. Failing additional appropriations, the building is about to collapse. The Maryville Junior Chamber of Commerce may undertake the work, with the full support of the local paper which urged public support in an editorial, "What Texas Would Have Prized Tennessee Lets Go to Wreck."